

Proposed Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A service retrieval apparatus which provides a retrieval service for retrieving a service provided by a server connected to a network in response to a request from a client and returning a result of the retrieval, comprising:

a retrieval unit that sets a retrieval condition according to the request from the client and performs a first retrieval over the network for at least one of a print service and a scan service based upon the set retrieval condition;

a retrieval result judgment unit that judges whether or not a result of the first retrieval satisfies judgment criteria set in advance; and

a retrieval result output unit that outputs the result which is judged to satisfy the judgment criteria;criteria, wherein

~~wherein when it is judged that the result of the first retrieval does not satisfy the judgment criteria, the retrieval unit changes the retrieval condition and performs a second retrieval over the network; and~~

when it is judged that a number of one or more services included in the result of the first retrieval has not reached a lower limit number set as the judgment criteria, the retrieval unit changes ~~the retrieval condition~~ a geographic area which is to be searched to be wider to perform ~~the a second retrieval, the geographic area being an area in which a server providing a service is located, and the retrieval unit performs the second retrieval with respect to a new retrieval range excluding a range for which the first retrieval is performed.~~

2-6. (Canceled)

7. (Previously Presented) The service retrieval apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a reply unit that rearranges the result of the retrieval based upon values

with respect to attribute items included in the retrieval condition, and then returns the result of the retrieval to said client.

8. (Currently Amended) A plurality of service retrieval apparatuses which provide a retrieval service for retrieving a service provided by a server connected to a network in response to a request from a client and returning a result of the retrieval, the system comprising:

a service information database that stores service information including address information and installation position information of the server and attribute information of at least one of a print service and a scan service provided by the server;

a service retrieval apparatus database that, when the network is divided into a plurality of sub-networks, stores address information and installation position information of a service retrieval apparatus with each sub-network included in a retrieval range;

a retrieval range setting unit that, by retrieving the service retrieval apparatus database based upon inputted retrieval conditions, specifies one or more service retrieval apparatuses conforming to the retrieval conditions and sets sub-networks, which correspond to the specified service retrieval apparatuses, as a retrieval range for the request;

a retrieval unit that executes a first retrieval over the network for a service according to the set retrieval range for the request;

a retrieval result judgment unit that judges whether or not a result of the first retrieval satisfies judgment criteria set in advance; and

a retrieval result output unit that outputs the result which is judged to satisfy the judgment ~~criteria~~criteria, wherein

~~wherein, when it is judged that the result of the retrieval does not satisfy the judgment criteria, the retrieval unit changes the retrieval conditions and performs a second retrieval over the network; and~~

when it is judged that a number of one or more services included in the result of the first retrieval does not reach a lower limit number set as the judgment criteria, the retrieval unit changes ~~the retrieval conditions~~ a geographic area which is to be searched to be wider to perform ~~the~~ a second retrieval, the geographic area being an area in which a server providing a service is located, and the retrieval unit performs the second retrieval with respect to a new retrieval range excluding a range for which the first retrieval is performed.

9-13. (Canceled)

14. (Previously Presented) The service retrieval apparatuses according to claim 8, further comprising a reply unit that rearranges the result of the retrieval based upon values with respect to attribute items included in the retrieval conditions, and then returns the result of the retrieval to said client.

15. (Currently Amended) A client apparatus which retrieves a service over a network provided by a server connected to the network in response to a service retrieval request and sends the service retrieval request to a service retrieval apparatus providing a retrieval service for returning a result of the retrieval, comprising:

retrieval result receiving means for receiving a retrieval result sent from said service retrieval apparatus in response to the service retrieval request;

selection means for selecting one or more attribute items, magnitudes of which can be compared, from attribute items included in retrieval conditions of the service; and

output means for rearranging an order of a plurality of items of service information included in the retrieval result based upon a magnitude of values of the attribute items selected by said selection means included in each item of service information to output the service information, wherein

the rearranging is executed when the plurality of items of service information in the retrieval result exceeds a number set in advance, and

the service is at least one of a print service and a scan service.

16. (Currently Amended) A service retrieval method which retrieves a service provided by a server connected to a network in response to a request from a client and returns a result of the retrieval, comprising:

setting a retrieval condition in response to a request of the client;

performing a first retrieval over the network for at least one of a print service and a scan service based upon the retrieval condition;

judging whether or not a result of the first retrieval satisfies judgment criteria set in advance;

returning the result of the retrieval which is judged to satisfy the judgment criteria to the client; and

~~when it is judged that the result of the retrieval does not satisfy the judgment criteria, changing the retrieval condition to perform a second retrieval over the network, and~~

~~when it is judged that a number of one or more services included in the result of the first retrieval does not reach a lower limit number set as the judgment criteria, changing the retrieval condition a geographic area which is to be searched to be wider to perform the a second retrieval, the geographic area being an area in which a server providing a service is located with respect to a new retrieval range excluding a range for which the first retrieval was performed.~~

17-20. (Canceled)

21. (Previously Presented) The service retrieval method according to claim 16, further comprising rearranging the result of the retrieval with respect to attribute items included in the retrieval condition, and returning the rearranged result of the retrieval to the client.

22. (Currently Amended) A service retrieval apparatus which provides a retrieval service for retrieving a service provided by a server connected to a network in response to a search request from a client and returning a result of the retrieval, comprising:

a retrieval unit that sets a retrieval condition with respect to a retrieval range according to the search request from the client and performs a first retrieval for at least one of a print service and a scan service based upon the set retrieval condition, the retrieval range indicating a sub-network of the network subjected to the first retrieval;

a retrieval result judgment unit that judges whether or not a result of the first retrieval satisfies judgment criteria set in advance; and

a retrieval result output unit that outputs the result which is judged to satisfy the judgment criteria;criteria, wherein

~~when it is judged that the result of the first retrieval does not satisfy the judgment criteria, the retrieval unit changes the retrieval range and performs a second retrieval over the network~~

when it is judged that a number of one or more services included in the result of the first retrieval has not reached a lower limit number set as the judgment criteria, the retrieval unit changes a geographic area which is to be searched to be wider to perform a second retrieval, the geographic area being an area in which a server providing a service is located, and the retrieval unit performs the second retrieval.

23. (Previously Presented) The service retrieval apparatus according to claim 22, wherein;

if the search request from the client includes neither the retrieval range nor a retrieval target area, the retrieval unit judges whether or not a service to be retrieved is a service for which a geographical condition is important, and

if the service to be retrieved is the service for which the geographical condition is judged to be important, the retrieval unit sets an area which is geographic vicinity as the retrieval range of the first retrieval.

24. (New) The service retrieval apparatus according to claim 22, wherein the retrieval unit defines a circle with latitude and longitude coordinates of its own installation place as a center and a predetermined value as a radius, and retrieves the service whose latitude and longitude coordinates are included inside the circle.